

Study Sampling Methods

The population list of all actively licensed RNs and LPNs was obtained from the North Carolina Board of Nursing as of April 1, 2001 from their administrative database of license renewal files. Three separate sample groups were identified to meet different study objectives, but a core set of questions were asked of all three groups: new graduates (those licensed for 1 to 2 years at the time of the survey); experienced (veteran) nurses that had received their initial license more than 15 years prior to the survey and who were between the ages of 46 to 75; and nurses employed in staff / general duty positions in both ambulatory and around-the-clock care settings. All samples include both RNs and LPNs and were stratified by geographic location of the nurses' home address prior to the random selection of cases. All nurses chosen for the sample groups were required to hold an active license to practice in North Carolina and have a North Carolina mailing address at the time of the survey. Any additional criteria unique to a particular sample group is discussed under the sample group headings below.

Regional areas used in the analyses are defined by Area Health Education Center (AHEC) service regions. The Western region includes all counties in the service areas of the Mountain and Northwest AHECs. The Central region encompasses the counties included in the Charlotte, Greensboro, and Wake AHEC service areas. The Eastern region includes all counties covered by the Area L, Southern Regional, Coastal and Eastern AHECs. All samples were drawn with equal representation from each of the three analysis regions. See the box below for county assignments.

Regions Defined by their Constituent AHEC Service Area and County Name

Central Region:

Charlotte AHEC: Anson, Cabarrus, Cleveland, Gaston, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rutherford, Stanly, and Union

Greensboro AHEC: Alamance, Caswell, Chatham, Guilford, Montgomery, Orange, Randolph, and Rockingham

Wake AHEC: Durham, Franklin, Granville, Johnston, Lee, Person, Vance, Wake, and Warren

Eastern Region:

Area L AHEC: Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Northampton, and Wilson

Coastal AHEC: Brunswick, Columbus, Duplin, New Hanover, and Pender

Eastern AHEC: Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Carteret, Chowan, Craven, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Greene, Hertford, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir, Martin, Onslow, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Tyrrell, Washington, and Wayne

Southern Regional AHEC: Bladen, Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, Moore, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson, and Scotland

Western Region:

Mountain AHEC: Buncombe, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, McDowell, Macon, Madison, Mitchell, Polk, Swain, Transylvania, and Yancey

Northwest AHEC: Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Iredell, Rowan, Stokes, Surry, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yadkin